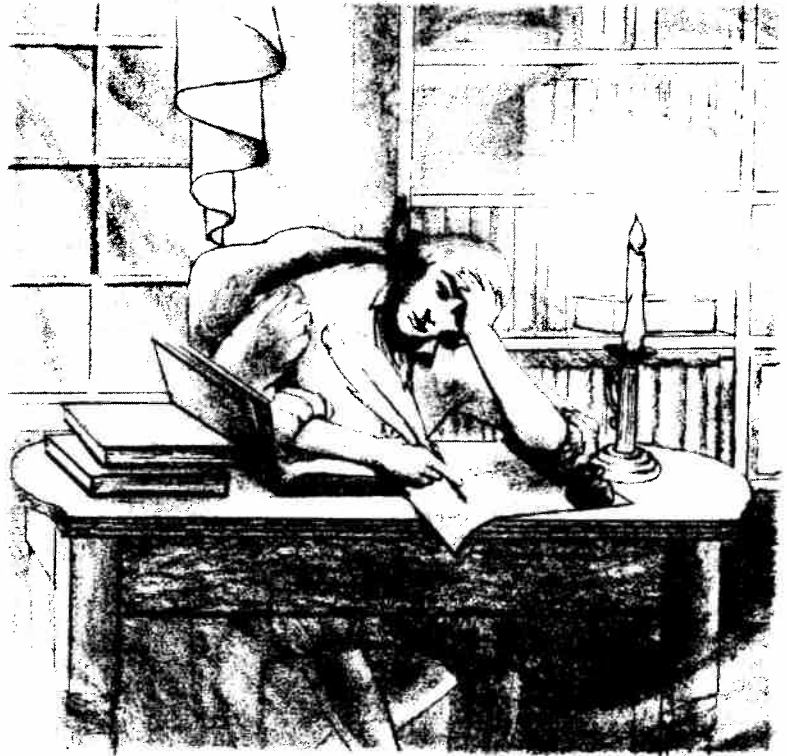


Mr. Madison Needs Some Help

Mr. James Madison was sitting at his desk thinking. He had been there for hours, and night was beginning to fall. He lit the brass candlestick next to his inkwell, and a soft yellow glow filled the room. Madison was tired. But he knew he could not give up until he finished the job. He had to think hard, for America was depending on him.



His job was to make a list of the freedoms and rights Americans valued the most. This list was going to become a part of the U.S. Constitution and would be called the Bill of Rights.

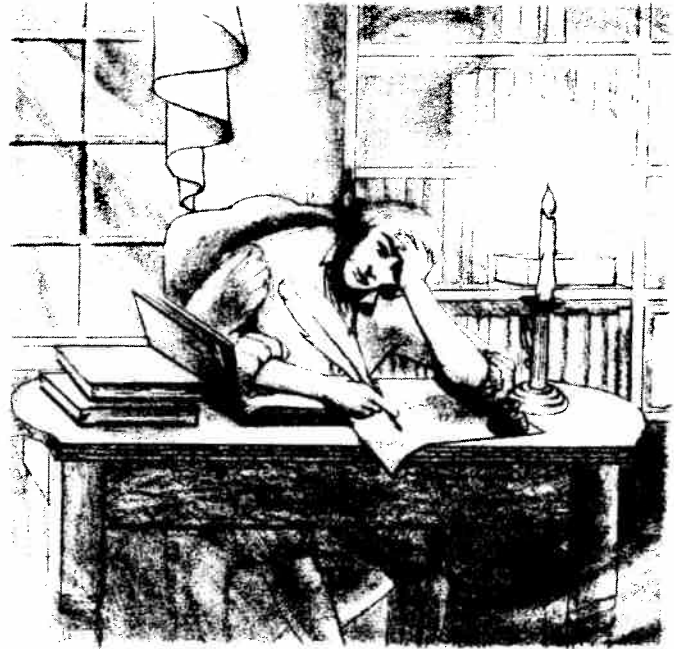
Madison remembered when he had worked on the Constitution. It had been two years since George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and 52 other men from the states gathered in Philadelphia. They had come to plan how the new nation's government should work. They had argued and struggled. Everyone wanted to make sure that the new government would be strong, but no one wanted to be ruled by an unfair authority again. Finally, almost everyone agreed on the plan. The plan was called the Constitution.

But many people were worried that something was missing from the Constitution. They wanted to make sure that the freedoms and rights Americans had fought for would never be taken away by any government, including our own. Several states decided they would only approve the Constitution if these rights and freedoms were added in a Bill of Rights.

The night grew darker as Madison thought about all the Americans had been through under British rule. They had been taxed unfairly,

told what they could and could not say about the king, and arrested for even meeting with other patriots. They had been forced to give food and shelter to British soldiers.

He remembered how British soldiers and officers of the king had searched people's homes and taken their belongings without good reasons. Some had been arrested and jailed without trials. Others had been put on trial, but not allowed to have a jury decide their case. He knew that Americans had not forgotten what they had fought for, and many wanted to make sure that the new government would never be able to take away their freedoms again.



But what freedoms were the most important? The states had given him hundreds of ideas about what to include in the Bill of Rights. His good friend, Thomas Jefferson, had sent him many letters and books. But now it was all on his shoulders. He had to decide what was important.

Mr. Madison could use your help.

Instructions

Your job is to help James Madison decide what rights and freedoms should be included in the Bill of Rights. To help you get started, you might want to read the story "Mr. Madison Needs Some Help" again.



Step 1: Assign jobs. Decide who will do the following jobs in your group:

Recorder. This person will be in charge of writing the group's ideas and answers.

Reporter. This person will be in charge of sharing your ideas and reasons with the rest of the class.

Step 2: Brainstorm rights and freedoms. Work together to think of at least 10 rights or freedoms you think Americans should have. Make your list here:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Step 3: Narrow your list down to five. You will give your five best ideas, or most important rights, to Mr. Madison. Work together to decide which five you think **really** need to be included in the Bill of Rights. For each right or freedom you choose, write a short reason to James Madison to convince him it is important.

Step 4: Fill in the Dear Mr. Madison letter. Write your five rights and the reasons you chose them on this letter. When you finish, everyone in the group should sign the letter.

Name _____

Date _____

Dear Mr. Madison

Dear Mr. Madison:

We have made a list of the rights and freedoms we believe are most important to Americans. We hope this will help you decide what to include in the Bill of Rights.

I. _____

Reason:

II. _____

Reason:

III. _____

Reason:

IV. _____

Reason:

V. _____

Reason:

We the undersigned agree that these rights and freedoms should be protected in the Bill of Rights. (Sign your names!)